

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 001197

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR DS/IP/FPO FREDERICK GARDNER, IP/WHA CRAIG MASS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ABUD](#) [AFIN](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [KESS](#) [KICA](#) [KSEP](#)

SUBJECT: TEGUCIGALPA FY 2004 AND FY 2005 LGP REDUCTIONS

REF: A. STATE 096070

[1](#)B. POST HARSHIP DIFFERENTIAL REPORT CRIME SECTION
ATTACHMENT A

[1](#)C. TEGUCIGALPA 00883 QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT 1
QUARTER 2004

[1](#)D. TEGUCIGALPA 00542 SECURITY ENVIRONMENT PROFILE
QUESTIONNAIRE

[1](#)E. TEGUCIGALPA 00224 QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT 4
QUARTER 2003

[1](#)F. TEGUCIGALPA 00224 ANNUAL CRIME EVALUATION
QUESTIONNAIRE

[1](#)G. TEGUCIGALPA 00224 ANNUAL CRIME SAFETY REPORT FOR
OSAC

[1](#)H. TEGUCIGALPA 02880 QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT 3
QUARTER 2003

[1](#)I. TEGUCIGALPA 01951 QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT 2
QUARTER 2003

[1](#)J. TEGUCIGALPA 00374 QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT 4
QUARTER 2002

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Post carefully reviewed and is modifying the Local Guard Program (LGP) contract in order to meet the requested 3.3 percent LGP reduction goal (approximately \$18,000) for FY 2004. RSO is currently working with the GSO contracting office to negotiate a reduction in contract vehicles cost as a result of these modifications. This reduction could result in an additional 4 percent to the FY [1](#)2005. The total reduction to Post LGP will equal 7.5 percent (dependent on the reduction in contract vehicle cost). Post EAC has carefully reviewed these modifications/cuts and unanimously agree that no further reductions can be absorbed given the current security environment. The initial reaction by members of the EAC was to find a way to maintain the current program. Five Agency heads individually supported an increase in ICASS cost to counter the budget cut (This idea was researched but was found not to be feasible. Tegucigalpa is a high crime threat post (borderline critical) with ever-increasing real crime. Many EAC members questioned why the Department was requesting funding cuts at a high crime post. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Since the third quarterly status report in 2002, every subsequent report (QSR) submitted has contained incidents of Mission employees being victimized - most events occurring in and around the Chancery, USAID building and residential areas of Mission employee housing. The following list highlights specific examples of assaults that have been on the increase during the last 18 months. During this same time period, RSO issued more than twenty Mission-wide security advisories via e-mail to employees and family members. This list notes only the more egregious crimes against Mission members and does not include harassment, conventional thefts or crimes against Mission locally employed staff (LES) outside of their official duties:

(Reftel J) The Milgroup Commander was assaulted by three robbers outside a local pizza take-out store. He was struck on the head with a brick, threatened with more severe injury and robbed.

(Reference B) An EFM was robbed at gunpoint near a bakery frequented by U.S. Mission families close to the Embassy.

(Reference B) A USAID Honduran employee was robbed and threatened by a motorcycle robber (Note - Robbers, often as two-man teams, utilize medium-sized motorcycles. This MO is so common that Mission security advice warns that any two men on a medium-sized motorcycle should be considered armed and dangerous until proven otherwise.) as she walked from her parked vehicle to the USAID entrance (The USAID building is directly across the street from the Chancery).

(Reftel H) Twelve Honduran Embassy employees were held hostage and robbed at gunpoint while preparing a residence for an incoming Mission family. Two employees suffered injuries requiring medical attention. There were four additional home invasions during the quarter against non-Mission residences but they occurred close or adjacent to Mission residences.

(Reftel H) Three American TDY employees were threatened

and robbed at gunpoint by motorcycle robbers close to an embassy perimeter entrance. One female was assaulted, beaten and required medical attention. (10 stitches)

(Reftel E) An MSG was robbed at gunpoint by three men traveling in a taxi close to the MSG house.

(Reftel C) The visiting mother of the MilGroup Commander was robbed by a motorcycle robber as she exited her vehicle.

(Reftel C) Another USAID Honduran employee was robbed and threatened by an armed motorcycle robber as she walked from her parked vehicle to the USAID entrance.

(Reference B) Peace Corps Country Director's home was invaded by three armed men. The Director, his spouse and daughter, and 6 Honduran house guests were held hostage, assaulted and robbed at gunpoint as three men threatened murder, kidnapping, and further reprisals if they reported the attack.

13. (SBU) Additional circumstances affecting the Post security program:

Honduras is the third most violent country in Latin America and one of the most corrupt. These facts, combined with the lowest per capita ratio of police in Latin America (5400 police for a population of 6 million and 1100 police in Tegucigalpa for a population of 1 million - gang members outnumber the police in the capital by 18:1.) exacerbate a dangerous, multi-faceted criminal threat to Mission employees, family members, and the resident American community. Police response to emergencies is problematic and unpredictable. During the recent home invasion of the Peace Corps Country Director, the response time of the local police was more than an hour - this, after nine people were threatened and held at gunpoint by armed men.

Another example of the inability of the local police to respond to an emergency occurred when the neighbor (they have a shared wall) of the DCM (also the landlord of the current DCM residence) was shot in the face inside his residence in an assassination attempt. Fortunately, the victim fled to the street and was spotted by an alert Embassy guard at the DCM residence. The guard immediately notified the LGF Command Center which in turn notified the local police and dispatched the LGF residential sector mobile patrol to the area. Upon arrival, the mobile patrol guards administered first aid and took the victim to the hospital, saving his life. Local Police arrived at the scene more than 45 minutes later and only after being brought there by the Embassy roving patrol.

In effect, the Post LGF is the Mission's police force and first and last line of defense. The much-needed residential security program is critical to maintaining Mission security, morale, and an environment where American employees and their families can feel safe. In times of emergencies, the only help is the LGF which responds within minutes - minutes that can save lives. The Embassy LGF accounts for more apprehensions and detentions of criminals near Mission facilities and residences than the local police. At any given time during non-business hours, the local police have only one patrol vehicle dedicated to an area greater than all Mission residential sectors combined.

Currently, the Mission LGF is managed by InterCon, which has operations worldwide. Since April of 1998, InterCon has had 19 guard deaths in Honduras. In Colombia during the same time frame, InterCon has had 1 guard death. While InterCon Honduras represents only 4 percent of InterCon's worldwide operations, the Honduras operation has accounted for 40 percent of InterCon "line of duty" guard deaths and has had more guards killed than all of InterCon's other overseas operations combined, including Africa. This fact, combined with a Honduran murder case closure rate of less than 1.5 percent, creates a dangerous environment where murder is commonplace and crime pays well. (35 American citizens have been murdered since 1997 and all but 3 cases remain open.)

In view of the information above, RSO has evaluated the local guard contract and proposes the following deductions to accommodate, as fully as possible, the mandated cuts.

14. (SBU) FY 2004 LGP reductions: The following is an itemized list of reductions and cost savings.

Position	Function Code	Hours Cut	Dollar Value
SD-3	9912	eliminated	\$1,094
M-9	5822	976	\$1,288
M-10	5822	976	\$1,181
M-11	5822	eliminated	\$3,865
M-12	5822	eliminated	\$3,543
C-11	5826	eliminated	\$1,096
G-2	5826	eliminated	\$767

CA-2	5826	255	\$696
C-1	5826	2,078	\$5,673

A total of \$19,204 in savings equaling a 3.5 percent reduction for FY 2004.

15. (SBU) FY 2005 reductions: RSO, in cooperation with GSO contracting office, is working to negotiate a reduction in vehicle cost as a result of a decrease in roving patrols from six to five. While it is estimated that this could result in a savings of nearly \$16,000 per year, multiple issues (dealing with local laws and regulations that are arcane, complex and skewed in the interest of the GOH) could factor into the final reduction figure.

16. (SBU) Post EAC concurs with the above planned guard cuts. Any further reduction in guard force could have a serious negative impact on Post morale. The home invasion mentioned earlier has left many families feeling vulnerable and has spawned numerous requests for static guard positions at residences in addition to the roving patrols. The RSO office is continuing an aggressive security awareness program to counter threats faced by personnel and re-enforcing the theme that security is a shared responsibility.

17. (U) POC for this cable is ARSO Dennis LeBow.
IVG-539-4504.
Palmer